

Subject: Favorable HB 221: Establishing Digital Services in DOIT

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From: National Federation of the Blind of Maryland

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To: House Health and Government Operations Committee

The Members of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland urge the members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee to give HB 221 a favorable report. We have been working on nonvisual access issues for many many years. This bill will be an important step in bringing government information to the blind citizens of Maryland.

HB 221 calls for the secretary to name a digital experience officer as the head of this new unit of the Department of Information Technology. Having an official in charge of the digital services unit means that there will be clear responsibility for accessibility. There will be less chance of government entities breaking nonvisual access when they upgrade their various software. Establishing the digital services unit also gives the needed priority for access in both platforms and software development.

What is the point of having public information if some of the citizens have no access to it? Making government information accessible to all the citizens in Maryland will definitely be improved by this bill.

Please vote Yes on HB 221. HB 221 will improve the efficiency of DOIT because it will identify a specific unit to carry out these responsibilities.